

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 SMI-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 DRC-01 /059 W

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R 231705Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2067

AMCONSUL DOUALA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 3841

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: AFRO-A-KOM

REF: STATE 228272

1. ON BASIS REFTEL I CALLED ON FONOFF SEC GEN OWONO NOVEMBER 22 TO BRING HIM UP TO DATE ON STATUE STATUS. HE WAS DULY IMPRESSED WITH ATTENTION STATUE HAS BEEN RECEIVING IN U.S. AND WITH IMPOSING DELEGATION WHICH WILL BE RETURNING IT TO CAMEROON. OWONO STATED THAT HE WOULD INFORM PRESIDENCY AT ONCE AND THAT HE WOULD MAKE CERTAIN THAT STATUE AND DELEGATION RECEIVE A RECEPTION IN CAMEROON AND KOM THAT WILL MATCH AMERICAN INTEREST AND GENEROSITY.

2. WHEN I MENTIONED TO OWONO HOW IMPORTANT IT WOULD BE FROM A PUBLIC RELATIONS STANDPOINT, FOR STATUE TO BE RETURNED TO KINGDOM KOM, HE READILY AGREED, ADDING THAT GURC, THROUGH MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION HAD EARLIER INFORMED FON THAT STATUE WOULD BE RETURNED TO HIM. THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT GURC AS OF NOW HAS ANY OTHER PLANS FOR THE STATUE ON ITS RETURN AND WE SUSPECT THAT AMBASSADOR TCHOUNGUI IN ASSERTING GURC'S RIGHT TO DETERMINE DISPOSITION OF STATUE WAS ACTING ON HIS OWN.

3. MILE MAIRIE, DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY'S DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN,
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AMERICAN AND OCEANIC AFFAIRS WAS PRESENT AT MEETING HAVING JUST

RETURNED FROM NEW YORK. SHE CONFIRMED TO OWONO THE GREAT INTEREST THAT STATUE HAD CREATED IN U.S. WITH HIS WASHINGTON EXPERIENCE OWONO QUICKLY SENSED PUBLIC RELATIONS VALUE OF AN APPROPRIATE CELEBRATION FOR STATUE'S RETURN--AND ONE THAT LENDS ITSELF TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TREATMENT.

4. WHILE ARRANGEMENTS FOR STATUE'S RETURN AND RECEPTION IS BASICALLY A GURC RESPONSIBILITY WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING KEPT CLOSELY INFORMED OF DELEGATIONS PLANS AND DESIRES FOR CAMEROON VISIT. LOGISTIC PROBLEMS IN MOVING STATUE AND PARTY FROM DOUALA TO LAIKOM WILL BE CONSIDERABLE BUT WE WILL COOPERATE WITH GURC TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. I HOPE ALSO THAT WARREN ROBBINSKL, OTHER REP FROM MUSEUM AND MR. GUSSMAN WILL INCLUDE YAOUNDE IN THEIR STAY, IN WHICH EVENT I HOPE THEY WILL BE OUR GUESTS AT RESIDENCE.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAW, MEETINGS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973YAOUND03841
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: YAOUNDE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731115/aaaaakvv.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 228272
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <25-Jan-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFRO-A-KOM
TAGS: SCUL, CM
To: STATE DOUALA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005